Saṁskṛt Pronunciation Guide

The system of transliteration used in this book has been almost universally accepted by Saṁskṛt scholars all over the world in the last seventy years. Each and every syllable is accurately reproduced with no loss of information nor any ambiguity.

Numerals: 1-१, 2-२, 3-३, 4-४, 5-५, 6-६, 7-७, 8-८, 9-९, 0-०

13 Vowels: *N.B. Long vowels are twice as long as **short** ones*

a अ ā आ i इ ī ई u उ ū ऊ e ए ai ऐ o ओ au औ ṛ ऋ ṝ ॠ ḷ ऌ

Short Vowels		Long Vowels		Long Vowels	
a S1	अ As in b<u>u</u>t	ā L1	आ As in f<u>a</u>r	e L4	ए As in th<u>ey</u>
i S2	इ As in p<u>i</u>n	ī L2	ई As in p<u>ea</u>ce	ai L5	ऐ As in <u>ai</u>sle
u S3	उ As in p<u>u</u>sh	ū L3	ऊ As in r<u>u</u>le	o L6	ओ As in f<u>oa</u>m
ṛ S8	ऋ As in <u>r</u>im but without the 'i' [2]	ṝ L8	ॠ As in <u>r</u>im, but longer	au L7	औ As in h<u>ow</u>
ḷ S9	ऌ As in <u>lr</u>ee		[2] ṛ is a short rolling of the tongue, ***not*** 'ree' nor 'ru' as it is in Hindi / Bengali / Oriya etc		

Symbols for vowels:

a-(nil)	्	ā–ा	i–ि	ī–ी	u–ु	ū–ू	ṛ–ृ	ṝ–ॄ	e–े	ai–ै	o–ो	au–ौ	ं	ः
क ka	क् k	का kā	कि ki	की kī	कु ku	कू kū	कृ kṛ	कॄ kṝ	के ke	कै kai	को ko	कौ kau	कं kaṁ	कः kaḥ(a)

	Saṁskṛt	Romanized Saṁskṛt	Saṁskṛt	Romanized Saṁskṛt
Symbols	ऽ	'	्	(nil)
	Avagraha (pronounced as a very short 'a')		**Virāma** (drop the final 'a')	
How to decipher the script	मेऽच्युत = me'cyuta = me + acyuta = ma + e + ' + ½ca + ½ya + u + ta = म + े + ऽ + च + य + ु + त		राम् = rām = ra + ā + ma – a वाक् = vāk = va + ā + ka – a = व + ा + क – ्	

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35 Consonants:

		Saṁskṛt	Romanized Saṁskṛt	Saṁskṛt	Romanized Saṁskṛt	Saṁskṛt	Romanized Saṁskṛt	Saṁskṛt	Romanized Saṁskṛt	Saṁskṛt	Romanized Saṁskṛt
25 SPARŚAS	*Guttural* (Throat)	क	ka A1	ख	kha A2	ग	ga A3	घ	gha A4	ङ	ṅa A5
		As in 'cut'		Walk hut		Gullible		Dig hard		Singer	
	Palatal Middle of Tongue	च	ca B1	छ	cha B2	ज	ja B3	झ	jha B4	ञ	ña B5
		Chuckle		Stitch-hut		Jungle		Hedge-hard		Canyon jña=ज्ञ (not 'gya')[1] Sing yellow	
	Cerebral (Ridge)	ट	ṭa C1	ठ	ṭha C2	ड	ḍa C3	ढ	ḍha C4	ण	ṇa C5
		Tub		Light-hut		Dove		Red-hot		Nut	
		(NB: Dots below all) Tongue curled up, tip touching hard part of palate									
	*Dental*** (Teeth)	त	ta D1	थ	tha D2	द	da D3	ध	dha D4	न	na D5
		Thorough		Ment(th)hol**		Thou		Rhyth(ha)m		In the end	
		**But tongue must press against all upper teeth for all 5 sounds									
	Labial (Lips)	प	pa E1	फ	pha E2	ब	ba E3	भ	bha E4	म	ma E5
		Puddle		Top-hut (Not 'f' sound)[1]		Bundle		Rob-hut		Mother	
4 SEMI-VOWELS (*antaḥ-sthaḥ*)		य	ya	r	र	l	la	व		va	
		Yard		Run		Lard		Varnish (But as 'w' if joined with a consonant in the same syllable eg. 'svāmī')			
3 SIBIL-ANTS (*ūṣmas*)		श	śa		ष		ṣa			स	sa
		(*tālavya*) As in 'as sharp', tongue in front (light sound)			(*mūrdhanya*) As in 'push' but with tongue pulled back (heavy sound)					(*dantya*) As in 'sun' (pure 'ss')	
3 MORE CONSO-NANTS		ं	ṁ (*anusvāra*)		ः		ḥ (*visarga**)			ह	ha
		कं = kaṁ			कः = kaḥ(a)					(*aspirate*)	
		Nasal sound as in 'oṁ'			* (see explanation below)					As in hut	

*If the ḥ is at the end of a line, repeat the previous vowel lightly: eg aḥ=aḥa, iḥ= iḥi

[1] Sounds like 'gya' & 'fa' exist in Hindi, Bengali etc but are never heard in Saṁskṛt

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